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THE BIBLICAL WORLD

VOLUME LIV

MAY 1920

NUMBER 3

MAKE JESUS CHRIST A SOCIAL ASSET

The more one studies the present world-situation, the more one feels the need of faith in Jesus Christ and his Way. Unless some good comes out of all this ferment, the pessimist certainly has won the day. But we do not believe that God has given up in despair. Unbelief is moral cowardice. Jesus himself might as well have said, "What's the use?" and gone back to his carpenter's bench.

Sentimentality is no cure for discouragement. Where Messiahs fail, carpenters cannot succeed. What the world needs just now is not a kindly carpenter of Nazareth who has quit his job to preach generalities. There is no salvation in such persons. The Jesus the world can summon to its help is the divine Jesus. Poets and teachers and prophets have done good, but they have not done what Jesus Christ has done and can still do. You cannot build social reconstruction on the carpenter of Nazareth. You need a Messiah.

We want intellectuals to believe in Jesus, not patronize him. Jesus would not want polite recognition today any more than he welcomed it at the house of Simon the Pharisee. Life is altogether too serious just now for launching religious newcomers at afternoon teas. Novelists and poets who venture to say an appreciative word for Jesus are welcome, but Jesus needs no claque, paid or unpaid.

Jesus Christ has been and is today the center of the Christian religion. He can be the center of social morality. Men built up the trinitarian theology to get philosophical clothing for the faith in Jesus which he himself evoked. They organized doctrines of the atonement because they felt that he was the only material out of which to make a philosophy of God's law-abiding love.

Men have believed deity incarnate in him because that was the only workable explanation of the fact that he satisfied their religious needs.

A classified Jesus is the unreal Jesus.

We can never make Jesus real by reducing him to the level of people with whom we gossip over our back-yard fence. The real Jesus is the Jesus who has worked his divine influence in millions of hearts and thousands of years. In him we see the Father. Through him we become children of the Father.

Christianity cannot be reduced to abstract principles. Its ultimate atom is a person, not a truth. Its ultimate ideal is a character—the spiritual attitude of this person, and not a treatise on ethics. Its deepest religious hopes and strongest religious motives are caught from the contagious faith and hope of a person. Its approach to God, its faith in his love and forgiveness—in a word, its confidence in the salvability of humanity and the saving power of God—are centered around the person Jesus Christ. He has power because he is a person. He is real because he has power.

That is the sort of Jesus the world needs now, not Jesus the carpenter, not Jesus the teacher, not Jesus the prophet, but Jesus the Savior, with a way of salvation.

If salvation be not in his way of love and justice-giving, there is no way of salvation discernible.

In a world like ours, it is either Jesus and justice, or anarchy and machine guns.

We have tried machine guns. Let us now in all seriousness try Jesus Christ.